

CHAPTER 911
SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES PROVIDED
BY REGIONAL TRANSIT SYSTEMS

761—911.1(321) Purpose and information.

911.1(1) Purpose. This chapter establishes standards for school transportation services provided by Iowa's regional transit systems under contract with local schools.

911.1(2) Information. Information and forms may be obtained from the Department of Transportation, Office of Public Transit, 800 Lincoln Way, Ames, Iowa 50010; telephone (515)239-1875.

761—911.2(321,324A) Definitions. For the purpose of these rules, the following definitions apply:

“Automobile” means a motor vehicle, except a motorcycle or motorized bicycle, designed primarily to carry nine persons or less, as defined in Iowa Code section 321.1.

“Bus” means a motor vehicle, excluding a trailer, designed to carry ten or more persons.

“Contract” means a written agreement between a public or nonpublic school or other group and a regional transit system which defines the terms and conditions under which school transportation service is to be provided. It shall not include the relationship between a regional transit system and an individual fare-paying passenger in either fixed route or demand response service.

“Multipurpose vehicle” means a motor vehicle designed to carry not more than ten persons, and constructed either on a truck chassis or with special features for occasional off-road operation, as defined in Iowa Code section 321.1.

“Regional transit system” means a regional transit system designated under Iowa Code section 324A.1 and all subcontracted providers to the designated regional transit system. It does not mean an urban transit system designated under that section.

“School bus” means a bus that complies with all federal motor vehicle safety standards applicable to a school bus.

“School transportation service” means transit service provided under contract to a public or nonpublic school or other group, including day care centers, to transport students to or from schools or school-sponsored activities.

“Student” means a person attending a public or nonpublic school, grades prekindergarten through high school.

“Vehicle” means an automobile, multipurpose vehicle, bus or school bus as defined in this rule.

761—911.3(321) Services to students as part of the general public. All services provided by regional transit systems must be open to the public. This chapter shall not be construed to restrict the use of these services by any individual fare-paying passenger, in either fixed route or demand response service.

761—911.4(321) Contracts for nonexclusive school transportation. As common carriers in urban transportation service, regional transit systems may contract with schools, day care providers, after-school program providers, or others to provide nonexclusive school transportation service that meets the requirements of this chapter. Exclusive service contracts are prohibited.

761—911.5(321) Adoption of federal regulations.

911.5(1) Code of Federal Regulations. The department of transportation adopts the following portions of the October 1, 2006, Code of Federal Regulations, which are referenced throughout this chapter:

- a. 49 CFR Part 38, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Specifications for Transportation Vehicles.
- b. 49 CFR Part 571, Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards.
- c. 49 CFR Part 655, Prevention of Alcohol Misuse and Prohibited Drug Use in Transit Operations.

911.5(2) Obtaining copies of regulations. Copies of these regulations are available from the state law library or through the Internet at <http://www.dot.gov>.

761—911.6(321) Driver standards. The following standards apply to regional transit system drivers assigned to provide school transportation service:

911.6(1) FTA drug and alcohol testing. Each driver is subject to the following testing for drug and alcohol usage as required by the Federal Transit Administration in 49 CFR Part 655, including:

- a. Preemployment testing.
- b. Reasonable suspicion testing.
- c. Postaccident testing.
- d. Random testing.
- e. Return to duty testing.
- f. Follow-up testing.

911.6(2) Training. Each new driver must, within the first six months of assignment and at least every 12 months thereafter, complete a course of instruction approved by the department of education, in accordance with Iowa Code section 321.376.

911.6(3) Driving record check. The regional transit system must review the driving record of each driver prior to employment and on an annual basis.

911.6(4) Criminal record check. The regional transit system must conduct a criminal records review of each driver prior to employment and on an annual basis. This review verifies that the driver has no history of child abuse or other criminal activity.

911.6(5) Driver licensing. Each driver must be licensed appropriately for the size and type of vehicle used as provided in Iowa Code section 321.189. A Class A, B or C commercial driver's license with passenger endorsement may be required. If a commercial driver's license is not required, a Class D (chauffeur) license with passenger endorsement is required.

911.6(6) Authorization to operate a school bus. Each driver who transports students must have an authorization to operate a school bus issued by the department of education in accordance with Iowa Code section 321.376.

761—911.7(321) Vehicle standards. The following standards apply to regional transit system vehicles assigned to provide school transportation service:

911.7(1) Vehicle construction.

- a. Each vehicle must be constructed in compliance with the federal motor vehicle safety standards for that type of vehicle as set forth in 49 CFR Part 571. The capacity rating of automobiles and multipurpose vehicles shall not be modified or altered in any way except by the original manufacturer.
- b. Each bus in use must also comply with the following federal motor vehicle safety standards:
 - (1) Standard No. 217, Bus Emergency Exits and Window Retention and Release. Buses purchased after January 1, 2000, shall incorporate a rear emergency exit door in meeting this standard.
 - (2) Standard No. 220, School Bus Rollover Protection.
 - (3) Standard No. 221, School Bus Body Joint Strength.
 - (4) Standard No. 301, Fuel System Integrity.

911.7(2) *Passenger restraint/protection.* Each automobile, multipurpose vehicle or school bus must provide passenger restraint/protection devices as required for that type of vehicle in the federal motor vehicle safety standards. Each bus must meet the standards listed in either “a” through “f” below or “g” below:

- a. Standard No. 207, Seating Systems.
- b. Standard No. 208, Occupant Crash Protection.
- c. Standard No. 209, Seat Belt Assemblies.
- d. Standard No. 210, Seat Belt Assembly Anchorages.
- e. Standard No. 213, Child Restraint Systems.
- f. Standard No. 225, Child Restraint Anchoring Systems.
- g. Standard No. 222, School Bus Passenger Seating and Crash Protection.

911.7(3) *Accessibility for persons with disabilities.* Each vehicle used for students with disabilities must comply with all applicable provisions of 49 CFR Part 38.

911.7(4) *Signage.* A vehicle must not be signed as a school bus.

911.7(5) *Department of education inspection.* Every vehicle must be inspected twice annually by the department of education school bus inspectors and officers of the Iowa state patrol to determine if the vehicle meets all vehicle standards set forth in this chapter.

The department of education will notify each regional transit system of the dates and locations of scheduled inspections. Inspections must be documented on a form prescribed jointly by the departments of transportation and education.

761—911.8(321) *Maintenance.* Regional transit system vehicles assigned to provide school transportation service must be maintained in a safe and operable condition. The following maintenance practices apply:

911.8(1) *FTA drug and alcohol testing of mechanics.* All personnel providing maintenance services on regional transit system vehicles are subject to drug and alcohol testing as required by the Federal Transit Administration in 49 CFR Part 655.

911.8(2) *Daily pretrip vehicle inspections.* Drivers of these vehicles must perform daily pretrip vehicle inspections using a form prescribed by the department of transportation. Regional transit systems must retain daily pretrip vehicle inspection reports and documentation of follow-up maintenance for one year.

911.8(3) *Annual vehicle inspection.* Maintenance personnel must annually inspect each vehicle using a form prescribed by the department of transportation. Regional transit systems must retain annual inspection forms for one year.

761—911.9(321) *Safety equipment.* Regional transit system vehicles assigned to provide school transportation service must carry the following safety equipment:

911.9(1) *Communication equipment.* Each vehicle must be equipped with a two-way radio or cellular telephone capable of emergency communication between the vehicle and the regional transit system’s base of operations.

911.9(2) *First-aid/body fluids cleanup kit(s).* Each vehicle must be equipped with a first-aid kit of sufficient size and content for the capacity of the vehicle and, in addition, be equipped with a body fluid cleanup kit. These may be provided as separate kits or combined into one kit. The contents of the kit(s) must be contained in one or more moisture-proof and dustproof containers mounted in an accessible location within the driver’s compartment and must be removable from the vehicle in an emergency.

911.9(3) *Fire extinguisher.* Each bus or school bus must be equipped with a minimum 5-pound capacity, dry chemical fire extinguisher. Each automobile and multipurpose vehicle must be equipped with an extinguisher of at least 2.5-pound capacity. Extinguishers must have a 2A-10BC rating.

761—911.10(321) Operating policies. School transportation services provided by regional transit systems must be designed to maximize the safety of student riders and must, at a minimum, meet the following standards:

911.10(1) *Passenger loading/unloading.* Unless prohibited by law, students transported in vehicles other than school buses must be loaded and unloaded on the same side of the street as their residence or other origin or destination. Students may be released only to the custody of a designated school official, parent or guardian, employee of the department of human services, or law enforcement official, unless other arrangements are made in advance.

911.10(2) *Student passenger behavior and discipline policy.* Each contract for school transportation service must include a policy relating to the behavior of students while they ride in vehicles. The regional transit system or school must provide instruction to all drivers assigned to school transportation service relative to the content and application of the policy. If a student is removed from a vehicle for one or more policy violations, the student may be released only to the custody of a school official, parent or guardian, employee of the department of human services or a law enforcement officer. In all cases, the school must be notified immediately of any such disciplinary action, and a written report must be filed with the school describing the circumstances resulting in the removal.

911.10(3) *Standing prohibited.* Under no circumstances shall a student be permitted or required to stand while a vehicle is in motion. Every student must be provided an appropriate seat at all times.

911.10(4) *Stops at rail crossings.* Every driver must make a complete stop before crossing the tracks of any railroad crossing, in accordance with Iowa Code section 321.343. In the case of a bus or school bus, the driver must open the service entrance door, look and listen for approaching trains and proceed to cross the tracks only when the driver can do so safely. No stop is needed where the crossing is posted with an exempt sign.

911.10(5) *Accident reporting.* If a driver is involved in a collision or other incident causing or having a potential to cause injuries to students, the regional transit system must immediately notify the school of the incident. The regional transit system must file all accident reports required by law. In addition, the regional transit system must complete a school bus accident report on a form prescribed by the department of education and submit it to the school or the department of education.

911.10(6) *Passenger instruction/evacuation drills.* Each school must provide students assigned to school transportation service with school bus passenger safety instruction and emergency evacuation drills at least twice each school year. These evacuation drills must involve a vehicle of the same type used to provide the school transportation service.

911.10(7) *Special training for drivers carrying students with disabilities.* Each school contracting for school transportation services for a student with one or more disabilities must provide the regional transit system with information on any special needs of the student and, if necessary, provide the assigned driver with appropriate information and training on how to appropriately respond to the needs of the student during transit and in the event of an emergency.

911.10(8) *Posttrip inspection.* After each trip that had students on board, the driver must perform a posttrip inspection of the interior of the vehicle used to transport the students.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code sections 321.1, 321.189, 321.343, 321.376, 321.377 and 324A.1.

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